

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0533**

HENRY A. WAXMAN  
33RD DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

November 18, 2013

The Honorable Eric K. Shinseki  
Secretary of Veterans Affairs  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20420-0002

Dear Secretary Shinseki:

I am writing to follow up on the meeting Senator Feinstein, Los Angeles County Supervisor Yaroslavsky, and I had with you on July 30, 2013.

During the meeting, you requested that Senator Feinstein and I introduce legislation that would amend Section 224 of P.L. 110-161, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2008, which prohibits the sale and disposal of land at the West Los Angeles VA Medical Center (West LA VA) and the use of Enhanced Use Leases (EUL) on the property.

As you know, Section 224 was enacted to prevent commercialization of the West LA VA property. I am sympathetic to your concern that the measure has limited the VA's opportunities to enter into a public private partnership to renovate and operate Buildings 205 and 208 for long-term therapeutic housing for chronically homeless veterans. My office is currently reviewing legislative language that could give the VA a narrow exemption for that purpose while also ensuring that the West LA VA property continues to serve the exclusive needs of veterans.

While a change in the law would address the immediate need to develop Buildings 205 and 208, this effort highlights the long term need to develop a comprehensive plan for services at the West LA VA. In June 2011, the VA adopted a Master Plan pursuant to the Veterans Programs Enhancement Act of 1998 (Master Plan). The Master Plan offers a loose framework of projects to be considered for underutilized buildings on the campus. I believe a detailed blueprint of the Master Plan, including timeframes, funding streams, and uses of vacant buildings, and putting into place short, mid, and long term priorities would provide the West LA VA with a roadmap for making the best uses of the campus for direct veteran services in the future.

From Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) to mental health and substance abuse challenges to trauma from sexual assault, the veteran community has an array of complex health problems. Developing a comprehensive plan would allow the West LA VA to become better equipped to deliver more effective, integrated care to


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veterans. Ideally, the West LA VA campus should offer veterans easy access to a comprehensive set of services that support their physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, social and financial well-being.

I would appreciate having information about the VA's long term vision for the West LA VA campus. Filling in the details of the 2011 Master Plan would provide an important guidepost for the future of the campus and hopefully alleviate the need for short term legislative fixes.

Sincerely,

  
HENRY A. WAXMAN  
Member of Congress

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